/29 cont./ 836
transition into a normal sex life somewhat easier. Most girls begin sexual relations about the age of 11 or 12. It was noteworthy that in some cases menstruation started after the first child. Menarche is certainly viewed as a milestone in the individual life cycle, for it was /30/ often well-remembered by elderly women. It does not have the high emotional coloring attached to circumcision for the male, however. First intercourse is usually with an adult male, frequently occurring in a chance situation where the girl is surprised alone in the brush or while in bathing. In Atuona, where the convent school for girls of the archipelago is maintained by the Missionaries of the Sacre's Coeurs de Piopus, many of the girls have their first sexual experience while picking coffee on the mission lands. There, during coffee season, the girls are sent out to harvest the crop, but many of the male residents of the valley wait in the dense brush around the coffee stands in hope of finding a willing girl. Girls who do not receive the advances of males at these times are often raped with the help of their more sophisticated girl friends, to insure that they will not confess what they have witnessed.

[145] [881] [197] [871] [839]

Beside such frequent chance meetings in the bush, some contact occurs around the homes of girls approaching puberty. Nocturnal visitations by males begin and become more frequent as physical maturation becomes more obvious. Most of these night forays are unsuccessful due to the unsophisticated behavior of the girls, who are quite fearful of parental intrusion. Parents often take elaborate precautions to protect girls at this time, forcing them to sleep in inaccessible corners of the house, with younger children or with the parents close by; forbidding trips to the latrine unchaperoned; closing all windows and doors tightly and tying a noisy dog around the house.

[513]

/31/ Under certain circumstances, however, the parents will openly condone sexual relations for young girls, and go so far as to force them into it if they feel that the rewards are sufficient. The motivation in such cases is invariably economic. The presence of a government fishing vessel in the archipelago provoked a wholesale business in bartering sexual favors for

836 548 648 [648]

/31 cont./ 548
clothing, tools, ammunition, outboard engines, bicycles and 648
sewing machines which the crew had brought especially for 836
that purpose. Parents took their daughters to the ship, received the gifts from the appropriate crew member and discreetly departed or got drunk. In one instance a 14-year old's virginity, carefully guarded otherwise, was purchased for a box of very scarce rifle cartridges.

In other cases, parents are happy to see their daughters 554
form a relationship with an individual of importance such as a 648
resident French official, a ship's officer on a vessel regularly
traversing the archipelago, or a storekeeper. The element of permanence is a necessary factor in such matters, as a transient relationship is of little value to the girl or her parents. Although the parents are frequently prompted by economic self-interest in suggesting such an arrangement to a daughter, they may also act for prestige purposes alone. The mistress of the superintendent of cargo on a copra-schooner calling in the islands was a rather wealthy girl by native standards. Her parents, although undoubtedly happy to see her the recipient of many gifts, received none themselves and seemed to feel that it was the prestige of their daughter being attached to a really wealthy individual that was of value to them personally, not the potential financial benefit.

/32/ At puberty, girls attempt to stimulate the de- 826
velopment of their breasts by daily massage (na ku naku), usu- 832
ally while bathing or before retiring at night. Large, firm breasts are felt to be attractive to males and are definitely desired by the girls. This may also be an attempt to stave off the loss of muscle tone and ensuing pendulosity of the breasts which occurs in adulthood, often before the age of 30. [145]

Defloration (ha'a teka) has usually been partially ac- 833
complished before the first intercourse as a result of the [857]
strenuous work and athletic play which young girls indulge in, as well as masturbation (using instruments, as stated by males) [839]
and constant horse riding, often bare-back. The pain and [492]
discomfort attendant upon complete defloration is accepted with little trepidation. Girls are led to expect it and try to suppress any outward manifestations of the pain that they may [152]
feel.